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A HORRID MUSICAL DRAMA
IN
THREE ACTS.



INJURED



INNOCENTS.



Founded on the old English Ballad of "Babes in the Woods."

BY

R. A. BARNET.



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From "English as She is Taught,"
"Plagiariſt — a writer of plays."

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TIME: *unimportant.* PLACE: *England.*

ACT I.

SCENE 1, Courtyard of McAllister Hall, McAllister.

SCENE 2, Anteroom of McAllister Hall. (Designed by Poker).

SCENE 3, Schoolroom and nursery of McAllister Hall.

ACT II.

SCENE, A mountain pass. (You will only see a mountain pass — not a panorama.)

ACT III.

SCENE, Market place in McAllister village, McAllistershire.

CHARACTERS.

SIR RAWDON SLOMONDILEY McALLISTER, *Baronet*

LADY RAWDON SLOMONDILEY McALLISTER, *Baronetess*

In joint and rare possession of McALLISTER HALL, and, like many of the nobility, "hard on!" As they have no marriageable son, the United States offers no attractions to them and they are obliged to resort to —— but we anticipate.

CEDRIC McALLISTER, *Baronet's only son*

MARGUERITE McALLISTER, *Baronet's only daughter*

Two sweet, innocent little children, without guile and, if their uncle and aunt had their way, would be without —— but we will not destroy our anticipation of the *beau idéal*!

SIR BENTOLIE CASEY, *Baronet*

SIR BERTHAM O'SHAUGHNESSY, *Baronet*

Two admirers! Rather a conspicuous remark, but common place is not applicable to these gentlemen.

DONALD REGINALD EMBRIQUE, *Baronet*

HAROLD SALTON-STAIR MURPHY of Boston, *Esquire*

Who starts the sheeny thread of budding love in our little romance. We say "sheeny" in its poetic sense only.

HENRI RUFYAN, *Esquire*

GEORGE TUFF, *Esquire*

Two professional gentlemen swimmers. You must not confound them with summer hotel proprietors, or regular managers of church fairs.

MIKE FLY, a retailer

Who plays a modest but worthy part.

COURTES, LADIES, LADIES, VASSALS, LA'S, LASSIES, LIND Village Maids and
WOMANISTS by the full strength of the company.

INJURED INNOCENTS.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Courtyard of McAllister Hall. Chorus in hunting costume lounging about, some playing dice, others quoits, others drinking. Pack of hounds with keepers, bark. As curtain rises huntsman, c., blows the hunting horn off right, which is answered by another in the distance. SIR BERTRAM reclining, well down front. Enter SIR BENVOLIO, right entrance.*

SIR BENV. How now, boys, ready for the chase? — Good morrow, Sir Bertram.

SIR BERT. Rather bid me good day, Sir Knight.

SIR BENV. Forsooth then! I bid thee good day.

SIR BERT. By the rolling orb! I've thought of a joke! Would you like to hear it in all its primeval freshness?

CHORUS. Yes, Sir Bertram, in all its freshness.

SIR BERT. A wit, a man of jests, in passing through the marts of trade, stopped for a glance at an auctioneer's — the auctioneer seeing the fellow, quoth: "Friend, I thank thee for a bid." Then saith our jester, "I bid thee good day!"

(All look perfectly blank and solemn, and sing sixteen measures of "Auld Lang Syne.")

SIR BENV. Oh, you naughty Knight! Oh, you bad Knight!! Oh, WHAT a Knight!!! — But come, let us prepare for the chase —

SIR BERT. *(very much disgusted)*. Go chase yourself! I care not for the chase.

SIR BENV. Nay! Nay! My bully boy, not so. Think how

our doughty ancestors did drive the wild beast to his lair. Shall we not "go to it" as says our Willie Shakspeare?

SIR BERT. Why certainly go to——any place you please. But stay! here comes Sir Rawdon and his noble hound.

(Enter SIR RAWDON, *left, holding a rope or string to which is attached a very small dog.*)

SIR RAW. Very true; I am coming, and so is the dog. (*Point-
ing towards the string.*) Behold the leader of our pack! our "right
hau-gu-er." Look at him!

ALL. We are looking, Sir Rawdon.

SIR BENV. How do you call that dog?

SIR RAW. I don't call him, I pull the string. (*Suits the action
to the words.*)

SIR BENV. Let us to the chase! Where is the fox?

SIR RAW. What! the fox not here? I'll bet you, she's got
him! (*Looks suspiciously about.*) You know "she"!—Lady McAl-
ister—my wife! She has a great deal of character.

SIR BENV. Has what?

SIR RAW. A good deal of character.

SIR BERT. How does it affect her?

SIR RAW. It doesn't affect her at all—it affects me!

Song—SIR RAWDON.

(Enter RETAINER, *left, with a box in which is supposed to be
a fox.*)

SIR RAW. What, h! Retainer! Is the fox within?

RETAINER. He is, my lord!

SIR RAW. Brava! On to the hunt! No time have we to lose,
To the saddle! Sound the horns! I will let the fox out. (*Horns.*)

SIR BERT. This really makes us seem quite English, you
know.

SIR BENV. Seem quite English! Blast it, man, we are English!

SIR BERT. Why, fawney! I forgot! We are English!!

SIR RAW. Away! Away!

Full hunting chorus.

(*At ending of chorus more off right entrances, most of chorus getting off the stage before they are called back by SIR RAWDON.*)

SIR RAW. Come back, my friends; not so fast. The fox hasn't started yet! (*To RETAINER.*) Where's your wild beast? Is he *within*? (*pointing to box.*)

RETAINER (*looking very carefully in the box.*) He is, my lord! (*Taking another look.*) Fast asleep!

SIR RAW. Pull him out!

SIR BERT. How can you chase the wild beast to his lair, Sir Rawdon, when he is tame?

SIR BENV. And hasn't any lair?

SIR RAW. Base minions! what next?

LADY MCA. (*from without.*) Sir Rawdon! Sir Rawdon!

(*All start in terror — LADY MCA. enters left, advances to centre of stage and looks carefully around, especially at the hounds and box containing the fox.*)

LADY MCA. For twenty-seven years I have been Vice-President of the McAllister Branch of the Woman's Auxiliary to the British Board of the International Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Dumb Beasts, and I have never seen so cruel a sight as this.

SIR RAW. I would I were a damn beast — I would say dumb beast.

LADY MCA. In my official capacity, Tompkins, I request you to remove these astonished and disappointed hounds. As for you, gentlemen, join the Myopia Club and hunt the rabbits of Beverly; as Cadet sharpshooters hit the insentient bull's-eye, or chase the flying hours; but never, never, for mere purposes of pleasure so disappoint your *dogs* again. Sir Rawdon, I wish to speak to you. Gents, stand not upon the order of your going, but *allez!*—

(*Ereunt omnes, except SIR RAWDON and LADY McALLISTER*
LADY MCA. *seats herself down front right, SIR RAWDON standing, opposite side of stage.*)

LADY MCA. Sir Rawdon, why so distant? (*After a pause, in a very decided tone and indicating a place by her side.*) Love! sit down!

SIR RAW. I am really very comfortable, thank you —

LADY McA. (*very emphatically and in a very loud tone*). Love! sit DOWN! (SIR RAWDON *sits*.) We will now discuss family and financial matters.

SIR RAW. Oh no! Let's talk about Nikisch and the symphony concerts.

LADY McA. (*ignoring SIR RAWDON'S remark*). The morning mail brought seven hundred and thirteen letters for you. Have you read them?

SIR RAW. No; I did not feel letterary this morning —

LADY McA. They were *all duns! seven hundred and thirteen (looking about mysteriously)*. Listen! Your brother was drowned at sea —

SIR RAW. I suppose so; he fell overboard nine hundred miles from land and couldn't swim —

LADY McA. (*crushingly*). Your brother was drowned at sea, hypothetically drowned, and as sole inheritors of this vast estate he left behind two puny, fair-haired babes; so frail were they (*very tenderly*) it seemed as if kind Nature must take them to herself (*pauses to wipe away a tear—changes tone*), but she didn't. They grew up uncommonly healthy. Now Cedric is twelve, and Marguerite's tender years are ten-dear.

SIR RAW. That's good! As a "bon-mot," that's good! It is certainly a legal tender.

LADY McA. (*majestically*). If allowed to continue — I would say that they will in a few years own the whole chebang. Something must be done. The hour has come for action.

SIR RAW. We might expose them to something — whooping cough, or criticism, or nervous prostration.

LADY McA. (*Deepening her voice, and very dramatically*). No! they must be murdered!!

SIR RAW. (*very mildly*). Do you really think so? (*Knocking at the gate. LADY McA. perceptibly affected.*)

LADY McA. They must be foully dealt with!! (*Knocking continued.*) What means that summons?

SIR RAW. Perhaps it means that some 'un's at the gate.

(*At first knocking, servant enters, left, with a very large tray: goes to gate, receives card, places it on the tray and comes down to LADY MCA., and at this point hands card to LADY MCA. The second knocking should occur after servant gets on stage and before getting to the gate.*)

LADY MCA. (*after reading card, to servant*). Show the gentlemen in. (*Servant opens the gate wide.*) (*To SIR RAW.*) Canst screw thy courage to the sticking place? —

SIR RAW. Anything that is agreeable to you, birdling.

LADY MCA. 'Tis well. Here are the agents for the deed. Confer with them. (*Exit LADY MCA., R. E.*)

(*Enter two ruffians through the gate, back, dancing in.*)

Duet—TWO RUFFIANS.

SIR RAW. Lady Rawdon Slolmondley McAllister, the massive lady who just made her exit first entrance right, said you were some sort of agents; she didn't say what kind. You might be lightning rod, insurance or railroad freight by your appearance, but —

1ST RUF. Quite true. I am an agent.

2D RUF. And I also am a gent.

SIR RAW. Oh!

1ST RUF. We alleviate misery. That's our business! — general agents for alleviation of misery. Have a card. (*Hands SIR RAW. a card.*)

SIR RAW. (*reads*). "Rufyan & Tuff, general agents for alleviation of misery. Quick Despatch. Cut Rates. Call us up on the telephone." (*Puzzled.*) Hum—ah—how—how's business?

2D RUF. Shooting ahead, but considerably cut up—

1ST RUF. With a good deal of "knocking down."

2D RUF. Here's our tariff—its list. There is a trade discount of seventy-five and three tens if we are assured of your regular custom.

SIR RAW. (*reads*). "Assisting at a bank opening, £150; passing contribution box with a bell punch, £300—without the bell punch we take our chances; advice in family matters, according

to circumstances." I think I will take some of that last: (*aside*) a man can't be dunned for circumstances. Have you had any experience with children?

2D RUF. Do we look like nursery maids?

SIR RAW. Oh, no, no, not exactly. I—I will elucidate. My brother was drowned at sea, hypothetically drowned.

2D RUF. Was it fatal?

SIR RAW. Apparently; he never came back. His babes survive him.

1ST RUF. Great heavens! then they live—

SIR RAW. That's just the trouble. They keep right on living. Now, what would you ask to—to—I hate to say it. I can't bear to think of it! What would you ask to—to—present them to an orphan asylum?

2D RUF. (*faintly*). Don't mention it! Don't mention it! I couldn't—I am too tender-hearted. (*After a pause.*) I think I know a man who could—

1ST RUF. (*pleased*). George, you insinuating rascal! Oh, it's a great work to alleviate misery! Perhaps you would like to read some of our testimonials. (*Hands newspaper to SIR RAW.*)

SIR RAW. (*reads*). The Shah of Persia is a great dancer—

1ST. RUF. That's a catch *head*.

SIR RAW. (*continues reading*). Apropos of dancing, the Rev. R. E. Morse of Spokane Falls, Washington Territory, writes: "For fourteen years I was an inveterate dancer. Despite the remonstrance of solicitous friends and the restless inquietude of my own conscience, I continued to increase in proficiency. My specialty was the St. Vitus. After seven years I was troubled with pain in the back, loss of appetite and en-m-i."

1ST. RUF. *Augwe*—French.

SIR RAW. "On taking one dose of Rufyan & Tuff's Panacea for Pain, I never again felt any discomfort to speak of."

1ST RUF. (*sighs*). That is all true. We believe in being accurate even in advertisements. You notice it says "to speak of" at the end—"never felt any discomfort to speak of."

2D RUF. Brother Morse happened to die just then of *ennui*. After that he didn't say anything to speak of.

SIR RAW. Did he feel any discomfort which he didn't speak of?

1ST RUF. He was a clergyman—of the Andover School—we can't tell.

SIR RAW. You said he died of *ennui*?

2D RUF. Yes—in a mild form.

SIR RAW. How—how much would you ask to expose the children to *ennui*?

2D RUF. Excuse me, please, while I brush away a tear. I am too guileless—I think I know a man who——(*looking at 1st ruf-fian*).

1ST RUF. George, forbear! You are too flattering. Sir Rawdon, for the mere technique of such an undertaking it is easy to name a price, but it is another matter to set a value upon tugs at our heart-strings, occasioned by dealing with innocent little children.

2D RUF. "How dear to our hearts are the scenes of our childhood, when such fond recollections present them to view!"

1ST RUF. How hard it is to convert into pounds, shillings and pence a tug at your heart-strings!—also to know how many tugs to charge. Ah, the power of a sweet child!

2D RUF. "A simple child, that lightly draws its breath and feels its life in every limb; what should it know of death!"

1ST RUF. Also, "Hark to the hurried question of Despair, 'Where is my child?' An echo answers, 'Where?'" How does two hundred guineas strike you, including an echo?

SIR RAW. Is it *cash*, or will you trust?

1ST RUF. The latter condition is impossible, as both Mr. Tuff and myself are in the fullest sympathy with the popular prejudice against "Trusts."

2D RUF. (*garrottes SIR RAWDON and pulls him to the ground*). Avaunt, there! Bloated representative of a depleted aristocracy of four hundred!! Grovel in the dust!—grovel!—dust!—grovel!

SIR RAW. (*as he falls*). Help! help!! help!!!

LADY McA. (*rushes in R. E.*) Oh, my dear husband! oh, what would I *not* give for his ransom! Take all!—*take the children*, but give me back Sir Rawdon! (2D RUF. *permits* SIR RAWDON *to get up.*)

1ST RUF. Good lady, be not solicitous. This gentleman, my colleague—I might style him my dear friend—a worthy man—but, I beg pardon, you haven't met. Lady McAllister, allow me to present Mr. George Tuff.

(*Here follows an extravagant imitation of an introduction a la society, conversation very animated. After a pause on part of SIR RAWDON, he interrupts, and 2D RUF. comes down and delivers his line.*)

SIR RAW. What did you knock me down for?

2D RUF. Don't mention it—just a little advertising. That kind of alleviating is four pound ten—

LADY McA. We are good friends, then, and I hope agreed upon all preliminaries.

2D RUF. We seem to be entirely harmonious.

LADY McA. Then this evening, ere the sun shall set, gentle Cedric and brave Marguerite shall be yielded to your care.

2D RUF. Trust them to us; they will feel no discomfort after that.

1ST RUF. Well, nothing to speak of—

QUARTETTE—*Topical song.*

“BUT NOTHING TO SPEAK OF.”

Pr'aps you *think* we are bad. Well, we *are* a crumb sly,

“But nothing to speak of.”

We may appear *cynical* and wink our *left* eye,

“But nothing to speak of.”

We have our bad moments—in fact, so have you—

But we're often *real* good and simple and true,

And when we backslide we are apt to feel blue,

“But nothing to speak of.”

End of Scene I.

SCENE II., FRONT DROP INTERIOR.—*Enter GOVERNESS with note-book and book of poems: reads from latter, L. E., and passes nearly across stage without looking up, walking slowly. Suddenly aware the audience is before her, she looks up and says:*

Gov. Excuse me—dear Browning is so absorbing. I know I look like a mere butterfly, but I am not. I am esoteric—that's my charm. True, I have a hard time; what with teaching those dull children and keeping my place in theosophy I'm busy. If it wasn't for the Doctor and Browning I should pine away; I should grow thin. There he comes now, dear man—not Browning, but the Doctor. I will be coy.

DOCTOR (*enter DOCTOR L. E., and standing near entrance*). At last I have found her.

Gov. I know such a nice quotation, I always have it at my tongue's end—or else in my note-book (*looks in that*).

DOCTOR (*looking at her admiringly*). In all her tutored loveliness.

Gov. Or else in the original (*consults book of poems*).

DOCTOR (*still gazing at her*). In all her cultured sweetness.

Gov. I can't find it—it must be in the other volume. Why, Doctor, are you there? Good morning. (*DOCTOR recognizes her with a bow, etc.*)

DOCTOR (*aside*). Harriet doesn't handsome up much, but how she can talk. (*Tenderly, coming down three or four steps.*) Methinks you look sad today.

Gov. Methinks I do. If it wasn't for one thing the bloom would fade entirely from my damaged—damask cheek.

DOCTOR (*rapturously*). What is that?

Gov. Boston.

DOCTOR (*dejected*). Oh!

Gov. I have not been *home* for many years, but I like to feel that Boston is not so far away. The air blows right over the ocean from Boston, you know. Isn't it beautiful to think some of the

air around us may be from dear Boston? (*Wipes her glasses.*)

DOCTOR. Harriet, I have long adored thee from afar.

Gov. (*aside*). So soulful! Doctor, why don't you try it nearer to?

DOCTOR (*rapturously, and coming toward her quickly*). I will! (*Putting his arm about her waist*). Wilt be mine?

Gov. (*very archly*). Reginald, I can't wilt—the air is too embracing.

DOCTOR. Harriet, do not treat this matter lightly; pause before you give me your final answer. The last census gave 69,362 more women than men in Massachusetts—a gain of 9,000 from 1889—

Gov. (*quickly, throwing herself in his arms*). Reginald, I am thine!

SONG.

End of Scene II.

SCENE III. — *A school-room with maps on walls, movable black-board, desks for the two children and teacher, with plenty of books, especially small ones to be used when CEDRIC and MARGUERITE throw them at the GOVERNESS.*

(*After drop is up MARGUERITE and CEDRIC dance in from door back.*)

(*Song.*)

MARG. Good! That old, disagreeable governess isn't here yet.

(*Sits down eating an apple.*)

CED. She makes me feel indisposed!!!

MARG. (*still eating apple*). Do you suppose, Cedric, that all Boston people are like her?—

CED. So I've heard. They are all brainy, and wear spectacles.

MARG. (*still eating*). How dreadful! Can't they do something for it?—

CED. They don't want to — they like that sort of thing — and they do say that you can't vote in Boston unless you can recite a Greek ode and know at least three of Beethoven's symphonies.

MARG. Fancy! Who is Beethoven — is he a Bostonian?

CED. Naw! Marguerite, you don't know nothing. Give me a bite?

MARG. No, I won't — you can have the core when I get through.

CED. I don't want it — I've got something better. *(Sits down and takes out a cigarette and lights it.)*

MARG. Why, Cedric McAllister! smoking a cigarette! You horrid boy — what would uncle and aunt say?

CED. I don't care a —

MARG. Such language! Cedric McAllister! If you don't stop smoking I'll tell Aunt McAllister.

CED. You will, will you? Now, you've got to smoke one yourself.

MARG. If you dare to — Cedric, I'll never speak to you as long as I live.

(Chases MARGUERITE around the stage.)

(Business. — Make MARGUERITE light a cigarette and take three or four whiffs. After she has done so, she will sit down and keep her eyes on one spot and look miserable. Be careful, however, that this business does not get too suggestive. GOVERNESS comes in after MARGUERITE sits down. Part of the following conversation is carried on during the above described "business.")

CED. Here, take it in your mouth. Now puff! puff!! or I'll choke you!

MARG. Oh! Oh!

CED. Now will you tell Aunt McAllister? How do you feel now? You girls can't stand anything.

(Enter GOVERNESS.)

Gov. Marguerite, what on earth is the matter with you?

MARG. *(sobbing)*. Cedric — Cedric — made me — smoke — a cigarette —

Gov. Infamous! Why didn't you come to me?

MARG. I didn't know you smoked, m'am.

Gov. Impudence! Now take your seats. We will now begin our morning lessons. Marguerite, what kind of a noun is "kiss"?

MARG. It is both proper and common.

Gov. Oh, you horrid thing! Again: If Cedric had been born a pagan, what would he have been called?

MARG. A heathen.

CED. If Marguerite had been born a pagan would they have called her a she then?

Gov. Cedric, if you and five other children were at a table and there were nine apples on the table, and, beginning with you, each child took an apple, how many would be left?

CED. I had first show?

Gov. Yes.

CED. Five!

Gov. What? Five? Nine apples in the first place, six children, each take one, and you say five apples left?

CED. Oh, no! Five *children* left. I should scoop the whole orchard.

Gov. Marguerite, if a man is born in Poland what is he called?

MARG. A Pole.

Gov. Cedric, if a man is born in Ireland what is he called?

CED. A policeman.

Gov. You stupid boy, I'll punish you for that answer — it's the only way to make you smart.

CED. You will, will you? Then we'll have a Brazilian Revolution — a change of government! Take that! (*Throws book.*) And that! (*Throws another.*)

MARG. I'll join — and that! (*Throws a book.*)

(*Sounds of horns without. Enter, back, SIR RAW, and LADY McA, followed by full chorus and principals. SIR RAW, and LADY McA, come down front without noticing the confusion in the school-room. Children keep throwing books until SIR RAW, commences his lines to the GOVERNESS.*)

SIR RAW. My love, our friends are now returned from the chase. I pray you let us proceed no further in this business —

LADY MCA. Proceed no further! Madman! Seest thou not the wheel of fortune pausing at our stakes? Shall we tamely yield them?

SIR RAW. Oh, no! I wouldn't give up our stakes.

LADY MCA. Ah! now thou seem'st thyself — art not afear'd to be the same in thine own act and valor that thou art in desire. Thou hast well said —

SIR RAW. (*just looking up and discovering children and GOVERNESS*). Miss Harriet, what perfect control you have over the children. Do you teach the Quincy method?

(CEDRIC and MARGUERITE use this cue for throwing several books at the GOVERNESS.)

GOV. No (*dodging a book*): this is the South Boston system —

SIR RAW. Oh!

LADY MCA. Marguerite! Cedric! (*Both come down front.*) We have decided to send you away on an excursion.

SIR RAW. Yes, on a Raymond Excursion.

MARG. How lovely! And auntie, will you have a little book, and know just where we are and what we are doing every minute we are gone?

SIR RAW. Yes; we'll know just where you are! At 12.46 tomorrow you'll be (*aside*) cavorting in the consommé —

CED. Will the excursion be extensive and all details personally conducted?

LADY MCA. Yes, my dears; and here are two of Raymond's most trusted agents who came to take care of you especially.

SIR BENV. (*to SIR BERT., DOCTOR and GOV. and CHORUS*). Like you the savor of the business? Methinks some danger overhangs the innocents, whereof you sleek villains hold the drop.

SIR BERT. Methinks so, too.

SIR BENV. Shall we to the fore? Shall we be conspicuous in this matter?

GOV. Gentlemen, we can do nothing — it would not be in good form.

DOCTOR. True, "it would not be in good form."

ALL. "True, it would not be in good form."

LADY McA. Farewell, dear children! I know how you struggle to conceal your emotion. Let us not prolong the parting. — Haste to your holiday with these estimable gentlemen —

BOTH RUFFS. Haste thee — dear children. Bid our friends *adieu* (*extraragant French accent*).

LADY McA. Farewell!! Farewell!!

ALL. Farewell! Fare thee well! and if forever, still forever fare thee well!

SIR RAW. Shake a "by-by."

(*Full chorus. Tableau as curtain falls. RUFFIANS hastening children off stage; or dramatic tableau of just taking them out the door. Rest of company separating on either side. SIR RAWDON conscience-stricken, LADY McA. defiant, SIR BENV. and SIR BERT., DOCTOR and GOV. conferring together.*)

End of Act I.

ACT II.

SCENE. — *Mountain-pass with view of village in the distance in the valley. Curtain rises while orchestra is playing "Don't get weary, children." RUFFIANS and CHILDREN coming down mountain-side, one RUFFIAN leading the squad and the other bringing up in the rear. One RUFFIAN carrying a trunk, the other a large satchel. CHILDREN, very much exhausted, come down front, right, and sit down: might take out a lunch and eat. RUFFIANS come down front, left, and put down trunk and satchel. 2D RUFFIAN seats himself on trunk.*

2D RUF. Ah, Henry! It is at such times as these that our early training in the dramatic profession proves so valuable.

1ST RUF. Even so. We have walked twenty miles and are just as fresh as ever.

2D RUF. Yes, Harry, just as "fresh." But it is telling on the kids. However, that is better than the kids telling on us.

1ST RUF. George, I feel some compunction about those kids.

2D RUF. (*with the greatest surprise*). What?

1ST RUF. My conscience troubles me.

2D RUF. (*laughing*). Ho, ho! He, he!

1ST RUF. George, you may leer at me with your leers and jeer at me with your jeers, but I don't feel right about it. I made it a principle in early manhood never to deceive children; and here I've brought these little innocents twenty miles and I have not told them yet that we intend to kill them. George, is it just or courteous?

2D RUF. Well, Henry, what do we gain by telling them? They think they are on an excursion. They are enjoying themselves. They fear nothing because they know nothing. Why isn't it better to keep them in ignorance?

1ST RUF. Yes, George, but this principle manufactured in early manhood constitutes my entire stock of principles, and I should so like to hang on to it.

2D RUF. Henry, I can refuse you nothing. Tell them.

1ST RUF. Come hither, little children. (*Children move a few steps towards him.*)

2D RUF. Come hither a few more "hiths," little children. (*Children come up closer.*)

1ST RUF. Little children, we should have told you before we started that at some convenient, secluded point we are going to kill you.

2D RUF. We cannot tell exactly when or where, little children, as we wish to select a time and place that will not be auspicious for detection.

1ST RUF. We ought to have told you this before. You will please excuse the omission, little children; it will not occur again. Now I feel better.

(*During the conversation CHILDREN agitated, moving away from the RUFFIANS.*)

CED. O Marguerite! what shall we do?

MARG. About the only thing that occurs to me is to give away our playthings and kind'er get ready.

CED. Perhaps if we indulge in some of our innocent prattle it may soften their hard hearts.

MARG. What shall we prattle about?

CED. Oh! anything.

MARG. (*to 1ST RUF.*) Were you ever a little boy?

1ST RUF. No; we were both little girls.

CED. Prattling don't work. Let us try flattery.

MARG. How?

CED. I think I overheard them say they had been actors. Tell them they look like actors—real actors. Nobody can withstand that compliment.

MARG. Can you act (*to RUF.*)?

1ST RUF. What do you think we are doing this evening?

MARG. I mean, are you real actors?

2D RUF. Why? Have you noticed anything in my manner that leads you to suspect such a thing?

CED. Oh, no! not the slightest: but we thought you sort of looked like actors.

1ST RUF. Little children, we confess we have trod the boards.

MARG. And did you ever take a part?

2D RUF. Not when we could get the whole.

MARG. Couldn't you honor Cedric and myself with a few choice selections from your brilliant repertoire.

2D RUF. (*pleased*). Not a bad idea! These are rather nice children.

1ST RUF. Show excellent home training. (*1ST RUF. feels in all his pockets, goes to 2D RUF., whispers in his ear: 2D RUF. shakes his head; then he goes to CEDRIC.*) Cedric, lend me a nickel?

CED. What for?

1ST RUF. Yonder trunk, which contains our extensive wardrobe, is secured by drop-a-nickel-in-the-slot combination lock. I desire to open it in order to give you a full dress performance.

(*Business of dropping nickel in the trunk.*)

CED. Now, Marguerite, laugh at all their old jokes and applaud everything.

MARG. Oh! I know. This isn't the first time I've been a dead-head.

CED. When an opportune moment comes we'll skip.

1ST RUF. Now, my dear young friends, we will give you some remembrances of those days when we were "unthinking, idle, wild and young."

2D RUF. And when "we laughed and danced and talked and sung."

(*Songs and specialties by the RUFFIANS.*)

(*Exit CEDRIC and MARGUERITE, right.*)

2D RUF. Our usual luck, Henry, the audience have left before the end of the performance — the children have escaped us.

1ST RUF. Which way did they go?

2D RUF. That way (*points off left*). RUFFIANS *pick up trunks and things and exit, left.*)

(*Enter, right, CEDRIC and MARGUERITE.*)

CED. Well, Margie, we have escaped that danger.

MARG. Yes; but how does the present situation strike you?

CED. Where are we?

MARG. I don't know.

CED. Nothing looks familiar around here.

MARG. Still this whole affair seems familiar to me. Wicked uncle and aunt, two ruffians, two tender children—a girl and a boy—deserted in a wood.

CED. Why, of course; “Babes in the Wood.”

MARG. That's it!

CED. But those two little fools laid down to die.

MARG. Yes; and some little birds that were in the neighborhood came along and covered them up with leaves.

CED. Well, you can bet your sweet life I'm not going to take any such chances to get bedclothes!

MARG. That's very smart, Cedric McAllister; but where are you going to get better accommodations?

(*Chorus outside.*)

CED. Hark! what is that?

(*After chorus is finished.*)

MARG. Some people carolling forth.

CED. Come down this mountain path. Perhaps we can find those voices.

(*Exit, back, CEDRIC and MARGUERITE.*)

(*Light “cittain” music. Enter, left, bear; walks slowly across stage to where the CHILDREN made exit, looks a moment off and then comes way down front, looks around at the audience, puts up ears, winks an eye, and then turns around and exits exactly where the CHILDREN did. As the bear turns from down front to go back, orchestra plays cornet solo, “How can I bear to leave thee,” until bear is off.*)

(*Enter, left, two RUFFIANS looking about.*)

2D RUF. We are observed —

1ST RUF. By whom?

2D RUF. The audience!

(*Exit, left, both.*)

(*Enter CHORUS, right, singing same air as was sung by concealed chorus earlier in the scene. After well on, enter SIR RAW., LADY MCA., SIR BENV., SIR BERT., DOCTOR and the GOVERNESS.*)

SIR RAW. Thank you, kind friends, for trying to make the journey as pleasant as possible. I appreciate your graceful, artistic rendering of the march. Your technique is perfect, and your rhythm and phrasing beyond criticism; but none of it can solace my distracted mind or my disordered stomach.

LADY MCA. Dear friends, be patient with Sir Rawdon, he is suffering from a complication of medicines, and is not in the proper mood to enjoy anything except poor health.

SIR RAW. Oh, remorse! remorse!!

LADY MCA. Sit down here, Sir Rawdon, on this mossy knoll.

SIR RAW. (*after sitting, jumps up suddenly.*) Fatal thought! It may be a remossy knoll! Quick, Doctor, give me a number four.

DOCTOR. No, Sir Rawdon, this is the time you take a number eight.

(*DOCTOR unbuttons coat and shows a cartridge belt or something similar filled with phials, each one numbered with a number large enough to be seen by the audience. Takes out number eight and gives SIR RAW. a pill — a large one.*)

SIR RAW. Lady McAllister, it is strange we find no trace of the children — are you sure they were taken in this direction?

LADY MCA. Quite sure — we came by the shorter route, they took the longer. They must walk this way. (*Takes strides across stage, and points off left.*)

SIR RAW. If they do walk that way it will bring on a relapse. Doctor, let me have a number five. (*DOCTOR gives pill.*)

(*Enter two RUFFIANS, left.*)

2D RUF. Here are several of the leading characters and the entire chorus — what shall we say to them?

1ST RUF. Nothing! They have the next lines — our entrance is the cue —

(RUFFIANS *discovered.*)

SIR RAW. } Where are the children?
LADY MCA. }

BOTH RUFs. Oh! they're all right! —

SIR RAW. (*joyfully*). They live!

LADY MCA. (*sadly*). They live!

BOTH RUFs. When you interrupted us we were about to say, oh! they're all right if they kept good marching distance from the bear.

CHORUS. A bear?

RUFs. A bear!!

1ST RUF. We left the darlings a moment in order to slack our thirst in yonder limping stream —

2D RUF. And just as I was taking my slack I looked across the ravine and I saw the children tripping down the mountain side with the bear in the perspective.

SIR RAW. What! ho! Search you ravine.

(DOCTOR *starts to go, but GOVERNESS tries to detain him.*)

Gov. Reginald! for my sake do not take any chances with the bear!

DOCTOR. Harriet, be assured there is no danger; I am used to bears — I was short of Sugar Trust all last fall. (DOCTOR, *exit, back.*)

(RUFFIANS *beckon to LADY MCA.*)

1ST RUF. The little children are now pushing clouds; hand us over the cash —

LADY MCA. Are you certain?

2D RUF. As certain as I am a sinner.

LADY MCA. That is undoubted security. Here is your money! Out of my sight!

(*Enter DOCTOR from back.*)

DOCTOR. All I could find was the prints of their little shoes upon the pebbly beach.

SIR RAW. Did you bring any of the prints? Although I prefer artist's proof, a print would have been better than nothing.

DOCTOR. I fear, Sir Rawdon, that Cedric and Marguerite are done for.

SIR RAW. (*with great emotion*). Don't say that! Don't say that!

DOCTOR. I withdraw the obnoxious remark.

LADY MCA. Friends, I am more hopeful; I think the dear children may be found. Come, let us try to cheer Sir Rawdon.

(CHORUS — *Curtain.*)

ACT III.

SCENE. — *Market-place decorated with booths, etc. Chorus in holiday attire. Curtain rung up while chorus is singing. During the singing chorus walking about and finally exeunt omnes on the last strains. SIR BENVOLIO and SIR BERTRAM alone remain in centre stage, back.*

(Songs and specialties, SIR BENV. and SIR BERT.)

SIR BENV. *(looking off right upper)*. Here come the McAllisters. See how gloomy they look!

SIR BERT. They have been in the gloaming ever since the children left.

SIR BENV. It is remorse!

SIR BERT. Or malaria!

SIR BENV. Or either.

SIR BERT. Or neither.

SIR BENV. Let us conceal ourselves while they pass.

SIR BERT. Let us — *(they simply come down front and stand in the centre of the stage in the most conspicuous place, only not so as to interfere with SIR RAWDON and LADY McALLISTER.)*

(Enter SIR RAWDON and LADY McALLISTER, right, both made up to look very pale and distressed.)

LADY MCA. I wish those darn children had never been born!

SIR RAW. *(very despondent)*. I wish they had never been murdered —

LADY MCA. Hush! McAllister, are you crazy?

SIR RAW. No, but I am weary of life. I would like to renounce the world and — move to Philadelphia.

LADY MCA. (*dramatically imploring SIR RAW. on her knees, extravagantly, and lowering her voice at each repetition of "Not so bad as that"*). Oh, Heavens! Not so bad as that!!! Not so bad as that!! Not so bad as that!

(SIR RAWDON *throws her from him and she falls on the stage.*)

SIR RAW. (*still very despondent*). Why do we come here to "festiv" in these festivities?

LADY MCA. Why?

SIR RAW. Yes, why?

LADY MCA. Well, why do we come here to "festiv" in these festivities?

SIR RAW. Oh, come off! That is not a conundrum and this is no minstrel show. (*Very sagacely.*) Woman! if you had not tempted me those children would be HERE! (*indicating a spot directly in front of him; after a pause, still looking at the indicated spot, changes it by pointing to another place, saying mildly*) No; about here.

LADY MCA. That's right! Just like you men: Ever since that unfortunate apple episode in Eden you keep throwing it at us women, and it is usually the *core*. But come and get a pink lemonade in the neighboring *Booth*; it will make you Barrett better.

SIR RAW. Booth! — Barrett! — a witticism! (*Very slowly and without expression*) Ha! ha! — ha! ha! (*Pause.*) No! it is of no use — I cannot be gay!

(*Exit SIR RAW. and LADY MCA., left. SIR BENY. and SIR BERT. do not speak until they (the McALLISTERS) are entirely off the stage.*)

SIR BENY. Do not make a motion or we shall be discovered; and if we are discovered we shall be found out.

SIR BERT. And if we are found we are lost. Who comes?

SIR BENY. The Doctor and the Governess.

SIR BERT. From the McAllisters?

SIR BENV. Yes. (*Taking out flask.*) Let us conceal a still—
I mean, still conceal ourselves (*drinks*).

SIR BERT. (*Grabs flask away.*) Let us! (*Drinks*).

(*Enter DOCTOR and GOVERNESS right entrance, the DOCTOR speaking his lines or beginning to speak before getting on, walking with arms about each other's waists; walking very slowly, so as to reach the left lower entrance in time for the GOVERNESS to say her line.*)

DOCTOR (*very earnestly*). Let it be now, love! All my soul breaks forth. How I do love you! Give my love its way! A man can have but one life and one death. Grant me my heaven now! Let me know you mine, prove you mine, write my name upon your brow—hold you and have you and then die away—

(*Both stop near their exit, left: GOVERNESS pauses some time—sighs—and looking up in DOCTOR'S face, coy.*)

GOVERNESS. Say it again, and say it *slow*. (*Then taking arms again, exit.*)

(*After stage is clear:*)

SIR BENV. They have gone; we can now come out from our hiding-place. (*Both take two steps front.*)

SIR BERT. Didst hear what they saidst?

SIR BENV. No! Didst you?

SIR BERT. Not a wordst.

SIR BENV. That is too badst.

SIR BERT. Yes; if we had heardst we might have known what they were talking about.

SIR BENV. Too true! Let us go to yon booth, where they are having an Ibsen play.

SIR BERT. Let us!

(*Walk arm in arm towards middle left entrance, where they stop a moment, and then say:*)

SIR BENV. Are you a vegetarian?

SIR BERT. No; why?

SIR BENY. I notice that you have repeatedly said Lettuce —

Exit.

(Enter, left, two RUFFIANS.)

1ST RUF. Are you sure the children will be among the performers in the games?

2D RUF. I wish I was as sure you would pay the four dollars you owe me.

1ST RUF. Then "we are the people." I feel so gay and free.

2D RUF. I think we have struck it rich.

1ST RUF. Your remark, George, glistens like a lead pipe.

2D RUF. I haven't felt so merry since mother-in-law swallowed a tack.

1ST RUF. But hold on; our friends *(pointing to the audience)* don't know the good news —

2D RUF. *(to the audience)*. Haven't you heard about it? EXCUSE US. The children are not dead, no! You saw them in the last act; you also saw the bear! He evidently went down those canvass-back rocks that represented the mountain chasm to lunch on the children. But he didn't! He was a trick bear belonging to a circus, and he induced the children to come along. They joined the circus. The children and the circus are coming here today. Now, isn't that nice?

1ST RUF. Then George suggested that we come here too — in disguise — I, as the supposed-to-be-lost-at-sea father of the children, and George as my faithful friend — secure the bundle, then move away.

2D RUF. In crime, Henry and I are dandies.

1ST RUF. This is no moral play — no m'am! Virtue stands no chance here! If you think the curtain is to fall with slow music on virtue triumphant and vice baffled, you are in the wrong Opera House.

2D RUF. There is no "Little Eva and Uncle Tom" business in this drama. You will see that vice and virtue is completely changed about; in fact, it's *vice versa*.

1ST RUF. I do feel so gay! How do you like your clothes?

2D RUF. Immense! How nice and soft they feel after wearing Plymouth Rocks all summer.

1ST RUF. I must do something to keep my spirits down. Let us sing, I am always saddest when I try to sing.

2D RUF. So am I.

(At end of song full chorus and all the principals come on and the "circus" performs—the CHILDREN last. During their act SIR RAW. and LADY MCA. are extravagantly agitated.)

LADY MCA. and SIR RAW. *(dramatically going towards CHILDREN, and say together)*. Cedric!! Marguerite!!

MARG. Go away! I am flush, and have no use for "my uncle."

CED. I have no flush so have no use for the auntie.

SIR RAW. This is too much! too much!!

LADY MCA. *(slowly and very pointedly)*. Yes, Rawdon, just two!

1ST RUF. *(to the audience)*. Now notice me. *(To CHILDREN.)* Me cheeldren!! Me cheeldren!!

(CHILDREN stand perfectly unmoved and unconcerned.)

2D RUF. Ceddie! Maggie! Get on to the old man!

1ST RUF. Me cheeldren! Do you not know your father?

MARG. AND CED. *(together, very placidly)*. What! papa alive?

2D RUF. Yes; papa is with us.

1ST RUF. But if it had not been for this BR-R-AVE MAN I would now be —

2D RUF. Serving time —

1ST RUF. In the middle of the Atlantic. We were wrecked, and all the ship's company save us two were lost.

WHOLE CHORUS. What! the rest all lost?

1ST RUF. All! but they were not in our set.

2D RUF. No; they were not in the swim.

1ST RUF. We alone floated ashore — on spars and chips.

2D RUF. A red and a blue.

1ST RUF. Me children! to my arms! (*Embrace.*) Ah! brother, glad to see me back?

2D RUF. Yes, brother: glad to see our backs—I should say, us back. We thank you now to pass over the simoleons.

SIR RAW. It is my brother, although I do not recognize him. It must be my brother, for he said he was my brother, and my brother never told an untruth.

RUFFIANS (*sing strain*). He believes it, for his brother told him so.

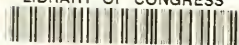
LADY McA. Foiled! He has come for his tin. We are tin-foiled!! (*Goes towards SIR RAWDON and whispers to him.*)

SIR RAW, (*quickly acquiesces*). Friends, let us have a song: then all come down to McAllister Hall and make merry over the darlings' return. (*To the audience.*) While they are eating and drinking Lady McA. and myself will emigrate with the remaining ducats and family plate. Have you noticed any flies about Lady Rawdon Stlmondley McAllister this evening?

FINALE AND CURTAIN.



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